

County Snapshot

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Based on total acreage, **Kern County** is the third largest county in California. Surrounding counties include San Luis Obispo to the west, San Bernardino to the east, Ventura and Los Angeles to the south and Kings, Tulare and Inyo to the north.

As of 1999, Kern County was one of the ten fastest growing counties in California. The county's population is projected to reach 1,073,700 by the year 2020, an increase of more than 58 percent over the current population.

The 1999 annual average statistics show the civilian labor force for Kern County to be 280,500 with an unemployment rate of 11.4 percent. Agriculturally oriented counties tend to have higher unemployment rates and greater seasonal variations in employment. The state's unemployment rate was 5.2 percent for the same year.

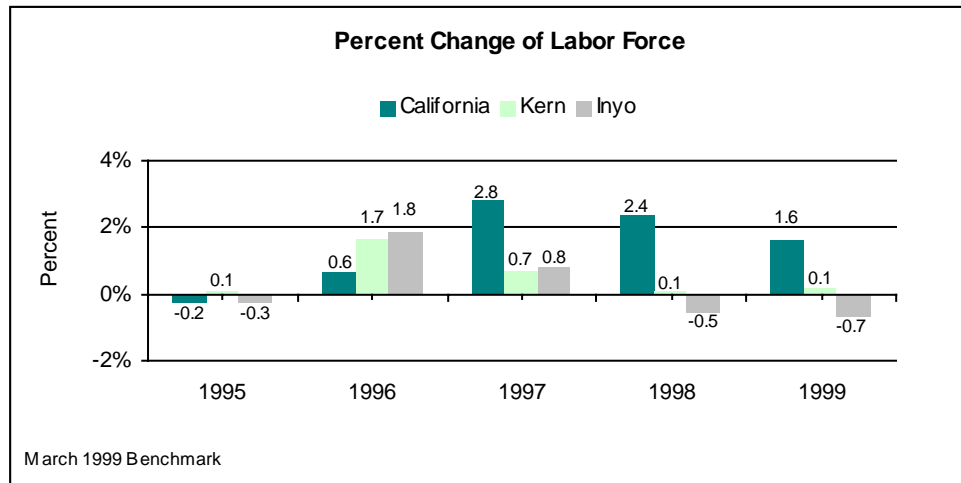
Government, the dominant industry division in the county in 1999, accounted for over 21 percent of all employment with the majority of jobs available in local government. Other significant industries providing employment were services, at 20 percent, and agriculture, which accounted for 19 percent of the total.

Most of the new jobs in Kern County's nonfarm wage and salary employment will be in the services, government and retail trade industry divisions. Over the forecast period 1997 to 2004, services is projected to gain 15,500 new jobs, a growth of 36 percent. Most of the growth will occur in the business services industry. Government is projected to gain 7,100 jobs and retail trade will gain 2,600 jobs with a majority of the new jobs available in the eating and drinking places industry.

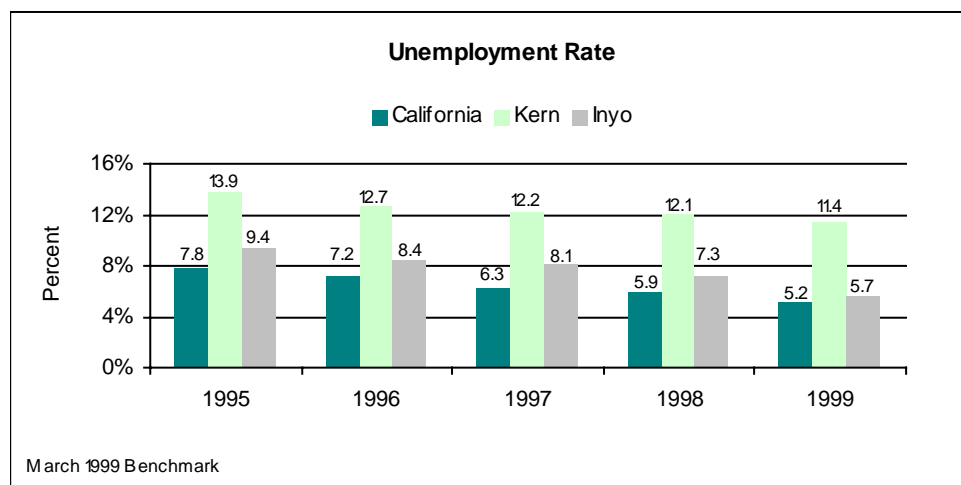
As an agriculturally oriented county, Kern County experiences seasonal variations in employment. Despite fluctuations in labor force and industry employment, the county is projected to experience growth during the 1997-2004 forecast period.

LABOR FORCE

From 1995 to 1999, Kern County civilian labor force grew by 7,200, an increase of 2.6 percent. The greatest year over growth, 1.7 percent, occurred in 1996. Over the same period, neighboring Inyo County recorded 1.4 percent cumulative growth.

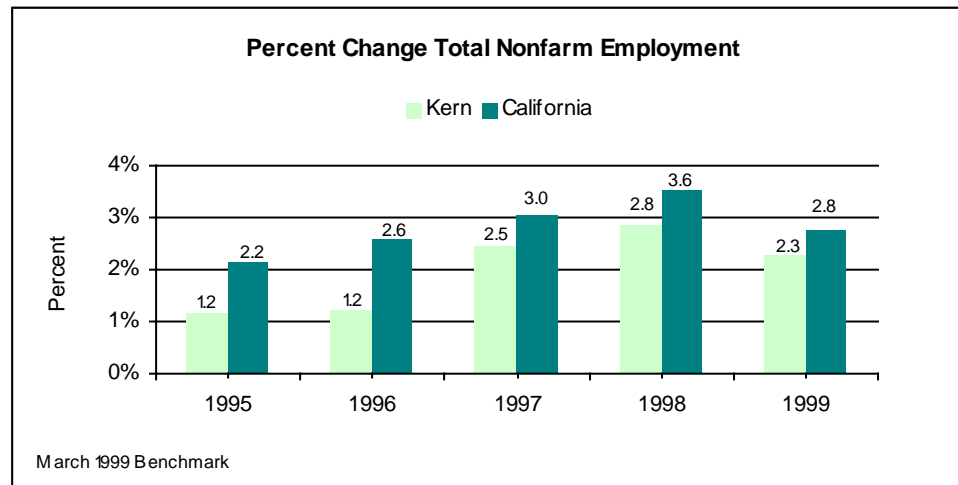


Over the years 1995 to 1999, the annual average unemployment rate in Kern County has shown a steady decline. The 1999 unemployment rate, 11.4 percent, was down 2.5 percentage points from a high of 13.9 percent recorded in 1995. Neighboring Inyo County also recorded declines over the recorded period.

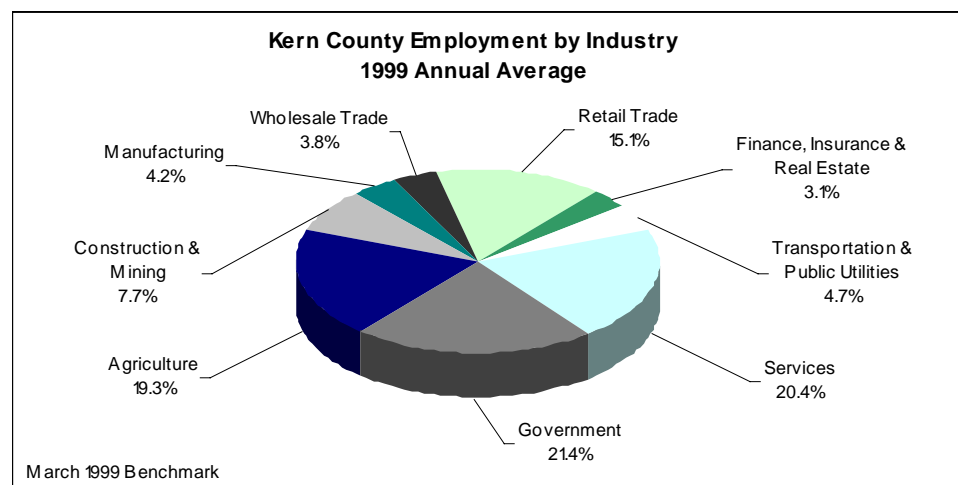


INDUSTRY EMPLOYMENT

Total nonfarm employment in Kern County grew by 15,700 jobs over the years 1995 to 1999, a growth of 9.1 percent. The recorded growth in 1999 was 2.3 percent with a majority of the new jobs available in the services industry division. The state's growth in nonfarm employment was 2.8 percent for the same year.



In 1999, government, services and agriculture dominated Kern County employment. Projections in nonfarm employment for the forecast period 1997 to 2004 indicate that almost 80 percent of the 31,600 job growth will be in the services, government and retail trade industry divisions.



OCCUPATIONAL EMPLOYMENT

Demographic trends, shifts in demands for products or services, technological innovations and the way business is conducted are some of the variables that drive employment in an occupation up or down. Also, occupations which have large employment and high turnover rates generally provide the most job openings. Kern County is projected to have employment opportunities not only in the high turnover occupations but also in the more technologically advanced categories.

Associated Occupations	SERVICES 1997 – 2004 Projected Growth 36.0%
	Registered Nurses – 880 job openings. Provide direct bedside care and assist physicians with examinations, chart the conditions of patients, give medication, and administer treatment as ordered by the doctor. May supervise auxiliary nursing personnel. Associate Degree. Median Hourly Wage - \$21.87
	Systems Analysts, Electronic Data Processor – 630 job openings. Analyze business, scientific, and technical problems for application to electronic data processing systems. Bachelor's Degree. Median Hourly Wage - \$25.04
	General Office Clerks – 540 job openings. Performs a wide variety of tasks. Clerical duties may be assigned in accordance with the office procedures of the individual establishments and may include a combination of bookkeeping, typing, stenography, office machine operation, and filing. Short-term on-the-job training. Median Hourly Wage - \$9.61
	Guards and Watch Guards – 500 job openings. Stand guard at entrance gates or walk about premises of businesses, industrial establishments, or private residences to prevent theft, violence or infractions of rules. Direct patrons or employees, control traffic. Short-term on-the-job training. Median Hourly Wage - \$7.03
	Hand Workers, NEC – 490 job openings. Fabricate, assemble, and hand finish products, or perform other hand work such as welding, cutting, molding, painting, grinding and sewing. Short-term on-the-job training. Median Hourly Wage - \$7.79
Associated Occupations	GOVERNMENT 1997 – 2004 Projected Growth 14.7%
	Corrections Officers and Jailers – 1190 job openings. Guard inmates in penal or rehabilitative institutions in accordance with established regulations and procedures. May guard prisoners in transit. Long-term on-the-job training. Median Hourly Wage - \$20.01
	Police Patrol Officers – 130 job openings. Maintain order, enforce laws and ordinances, protect life and property in an assigned patrol district or beat. Patrol on foot or in a vehicle; investigate accidents; apprehend, arrest and process prisoners; and give evidence in court. Long-term on-the-job training. Median Hourly Wage - \$22.04
	Systems Analysts, Electronic Data Processor – 100 job openings. Analyze business, scientific, and technical problems for application to electronic data processing systems. Bachelor's Degree. Median Hourly Wage - \$25.04
	First-Line Supervisor/Manager, Service Workers, NEC – 90 job openings. Directly supervise and coordinate activities of workers who provide protective services, food services, health assisting services, cleaning and building services, personal services, and other services. Work Experience. Median Hourly Wage - \$11.62
	Maintenance Repairers, General Utility – 70 job openings. Perform work involving two or more maintenance skills to keep the machines, mechanical equipment, and/or structure of an establishment in repair. Long-term on-the-job training. Median Hourly Wage - \$11.70
Associated Occupations	RETAIL TRADE 1997 – 2004 Projected Growth 7.5%
	Cashiers – 500 job openings. Handle cash and credit payments, make change, give receipts, account for all payments, and perform related clerical duties. Short-term on-the-job training. Median Hourly Wage - \$6.65
	Salespersons, Retail – 360 job openings. Get the customer interested by describing the merchandise and showing how it is used. May also order merchandise, stock shelves, mark price tags, take inventory and prepare displays. Short-term on-the-job training. Median Hourly Wage - \$7.49
	Combined Food Preparation and Service Workers – 330 job openings. Do both food preparation and food service. Short-term on-the-job training. Median Hourly Wage - \$6.05
	Cook Specialty Fast Food – 160 job openings. Make simple, fast-cooking meals and snacks. Short-term on-the-job training. Median Hourly Wage - \$5.96
	Food Preparation Workers – 140 job openings. Keep kitchen work areas clean and orderly, keep restaurant equipment and utensils clean, move supplies and wash dishes, trays, pots and pans used in cooking and serving. Short-term on-the-job training. Median Hourly Wage - \$6.58

This **County Snapshot** is a product of:
State of California
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Labor Market Information Division
(916) 262-2162